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THE
PLOUGH AND THE LEDGER,
OR,
Country VERSUS **City**;
A DIALOGUE BETWEEN
PETER PLOUGHMAN,
A COUNTRY FARMER;
AND
LYMAN LEDGER,
A BANKRUPT MERCHANT,
ALSO
AN ADDRESS
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OF THE
PROVINCE OF NEW-BRUNSWICK.

BY JAMES REDFERN.

Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings;
The fame with pains we gain, but lose with ease,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please.

POPE.

SAINT JOHN, N. B.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY JAS. DOAK, MARKET SQUARE.

BY PERMISSION

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

Sir William Maclean George Colebrooks,

R. H., LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, &c.

THESE SMALL FRAGMENTS

ARE DEDICATED,

By His Excellency's

Humble Admirer,

JAMES REDFERN.

TO THE PUBLIC.

A PREFACE to a publication, be such a publication large or small, possessing merit, or no merit at all, is as common as an exordium to a sermon—yet a formal preface to the following fragments, might be justly deemed a piece of egotism—as attaching an importance to subjects, which are barely worthy of prefatory notice—I should have let them introduce themselves to public notice, without any introduction on my part, but, for the following reason, which I give by way of apology.—Sometime before the meeting of the House of Assembly, it was advertised in several of the city papers, that in the course of the following week, two poems would be published; the one, entitled the “Plough and the Ledger;” the other, an “Address to the Members of the New House of Assembly of the Province of New Brunswick”—the long delay of their appearance has been caused by a want of printing paper;—better late than never, is an old, trite adage—the present publication will be found better late than never, if a liberal public should find any pleasure in its perusal, and so far patronise the author, as to *pay expences*—at the same time a small mite for his labours would be acceptable—and most gratefully received. . .

THE AUTHOR.

St. John, N. B., March, 1843.

THE PUBLIC

The public is a term which is used in many different senses. It may mean the people of a country, or the community of a city, or the body of persons who are interested in a particular subject. It may also mean the general public, or the public at large. The public is a term which is used in many different senses. It may mean the people of a country, or the community of a city, or the body of persons who are interested in a particular subject. It may also mean the general public, or the public at large.

THE PUBLIC

THE PUBLIC

PLOUGH *VERSUS* LEDGER.

God made the country, and man made the town.

COWPER:

Looking over these lines, Jack, or Sandy, or Pat
You may "read, mark and learn," or may "laugh and grow fat."

A THRIFTY farmer, Hodge, or Cowman—
Yet for the rhyme's sake Peter Ploughman
Just at the season of the year,
When farmers bring Saint John good cheer
(And ev'ry Saint John, James, or Peter
Should fare on fatter, richer, sweeter,
At breakfast, supper, lunch or dinner,
Than any thankless, glutton sinner—)
Brought down to town, in heavy waggon,
As much as one good *span* could drag on,
A load of things, fat, fresh and fine—
The flesh of oxen, sheep, and swine—
With other things, for dainty pickings,
Such as fat turkies, geese and chickens—
Which made the thronging town's folk stare
When open'd out on Market Square—
Annoy'd for half an hour or more,
By people pert, and proud, and poor—
With what's the price of this, and that,
That is too lean, and this too fat—
Whilst many a one had turn'd away,
Who wish'd the meat—but ah! the pay—
And after handling ev'ry thing,
That parted hoof, or spread a wing—
Each one exclaiming, cash is scant—
The times are hard, with such like cant—
When Peter cried, what would you wish? }
Go home and feed on stinking fish— }
You don't deserve a better dish— }
Here's well-fed beef, and pork and mutton,
Fit for an epicure, or glutton,
At two pence halfpenny a pound—
A paltry price, of copper sound—
Chickens at fourpence—lumping geese,
As low as fifteen pence a piece—
Turkies *according*—fit at least

To grace a Corporation feast—
 What would you have, again I say?
 Hands off my things, and pack away—
 They took the hint and one by one
 Slunk off till all the crowd had gone.
 Now shabby-fine, or would-be grand,
 Watch-guard on breast, and cane in hand,
 Step'd up a man that Peter knew,
 Accosting him, with, how d' you do? }
Peter—Quite well I thank you, how are you?
Ledger—As strong as brandy, cousin Peet—
 How do you sell your fowls and meat?
 Sell? cheap—too low, not worth the breeding—
 The carriage, killing, or the feeding—
 But having more than we shall want,
 I must sell some, tho' *cash be scant*—
 Or else I'd *yoke* and take all *hum*—
 Salt down the meat for time to come—
 And eat right off, chick, goose, or gander;
 Your town's folk have so rais'd my *dander*.
Ledger—Come hold your tongue, and weigh this pig—
 'Tis fat enough, but not too big—
 This turkey too—then those two geese,
 I'll take at fifteen pence a piece—
 Your beef looks good, I'll take one quarter;
 But then good Peet, you'll take some barter,
 Molasses, tea, salt fish, or so,
 Say herring, cod, or *gaspereaux*.
Peter—No, barter? no, I deem it proper,
 To have all cash—yes, ev'ry copper,
 As I sell cheap, I so can buy,
 And have my choice, at least I'll try.
Ledger—Well weigh them now, and send them down,
 I'll send a drayman up the town—
 Call down this ev'ning for your pay—
 You go to-morrow, don't you say?
Peter—Hold, not so fast, my would-be dehtor,
 I *guess* that I can market better—
 To tell you plainly, bluntly, briefly,
 What I insist on, first and chiefly,
 I'll have the *cash right on the nail*,
 Before my *things* shall leave the scale—
 Thanks to the News, I've lately found
 You *can't* pay *nothing* in the pound—
 Your store is shut—your credit gone—
 Your goods are sold—your business done.
 You'd cozen now your cousin too;
 But hold Sir Ledger, that wont do—
 Tho' times be hard, they shall be harder,
 Before my meat shall stock your larder—
 I would not wish to see you starve,
 Still, you should pay before you carve,
 Or earn before you eat, so go,

And wield the axe, and ply the hoe—
Break up the ground and plough and sow—
Then reap your crops when comes the *fall*,
And eat at last, the best of all.

Believe me, 'tis an honest toil,
'To spin the fleece and till the soil;
You'd think the labour rather rough,
But, use soon makes it smooth enough,
To those who'd rather dig than beg—
Who fear no use of arm and leg—
But like the steward that we read of
Some men who find themselves in need of
Clothes, meat, or money, turn to swindling.

Ledger—Hold—*Peter*—hold; your wrath is kindling
Your censures cousin *Peet* I ween
Are far too caustic and too keen—

Peter—What? you've ensnar'd your sordid self,
By the decoys you set for pelf—

No wonder it should spread its pinion,
And flee from you and your dominion.
You've stretch'd your wits upon the rack.
Have chang'd your course like *Tarry Jack*
'To get the windward side of some one,
No matter whom, a man or woman—
You've been endors'd and back'd and bail'd,
'Till ev'ry help and prop has fail'd—
You've gone *ahead* so far and fast,
That you are all *astern* at last—

Nay, but you've founder'd in the sea
Of debt—and, by your treachery—
For when you (sinking) cried for aid;
When some kind friends an effort made,
You dragg'd them with you 'neath the wave,
And sank the friends that came to save.

Ledger—Your charge is wrong and out of season,
Your passion runs before your reason.

'Tis wholly false what you advance,
And springs from total ignorance—
You prate just like a country boor,
Raw from the plough, or stable door—
You think our whole misfortunes spring
From speculation—no such thing—
Or *paper* credit—now decayed—
Why, credit is the life of trade.

From two or three quite diff'rent things
Our failure, or misfortune springs—
Not credit, nor rash speculation,
But stagnant trade, and conflagration.

And now to fill our cup of wo,
'To give our *trade* the final blow,
'That bungling statesman *Robert Peel*,
Has turn'd about and rais'd his steel,
"Fell swoop" has fell'd our timber down—

And crush'd the country and the town—
Peter—What? talk to me of ignorance?
Well, then 'tis your extravagance—
Your father was a stupid fool,
And you are of the selfsame school—
When trade was brisk he sold his farm—
His happy homestead, snug and warm—
Lur'd by a gilt imagination—
Struck by the charms of speculation :
For sev'ral years he seem'd to thrive,
Especially in twenty-five.
He kept a store, exported lumber—
Built ships—I cannot tell the number—
Liv'd like a lord—and, Jane and Hannah
Were taught to play on the Piano.
('Twere well if they were spinning now
And you were at the slighted plough)
He bought two horses, coach and sleigh—
He hir'd a groom—bought oats and hay—
Had two men-servants and three women—
Thus things went on, fair, smooth and swimming.
O! what a metamorphosis,
Throughout the house, in Ma' and Miss—
In Pa' and you, rude boorish boobies,
Rough field-stones, polish'd off for rubies,
As far as dress went—all outside—
No other likeness was descried
No true politeness, sense, or grace,
But, rudeness—folly and grimace—
Your sisters flaunted round the city,
Objects of envy, scorn and pity,
Much like the gaudy butterfly,
With silks and stuffs, of ev'ry dye,
Your homespun thick and warm and furzy,
Was now exchang'd for finest kersey—
The groom transform'd to *coachy-crackey*—
The butler-boots, to footman-lackey—
You were so lifted up with pride,
That when you took a country ride,
You thought your lordly selves so high,
You even pass'd your kindred by,
As if you'd neither eye, nor tongue—
Just like the dunghill whence you sprung.
Your father dreamt those things would last—
But, soon there came an adverse blast—
For, twenty-six upset his schemes,
And, scatter'd all his golden dreams.
His credit met its dissolution—
His all was sold by execution—
Ship, store, goods, house, horse, all, except
His business books, and these he kept—
And, closely kept—but, for detention,
They put him where I need not mention—

Some time elaps'd, when he found bail,
 To walk the limits of the jail,
 Till want, and grief, and wounded pride
 Soon broke his heart, and then he died.

Ledger—Unfeeling bumpkin, and ill-bred—
 Why heap your censures on the dead?
 Insult the son as suits you best,
 But, let his father lie at rest.

Peter—Well, saucy upstart, I must say,
 Like sire, like son—you've had your day.
 The book-debts once bequeath'd to you,
 To law you went—began to sue—
 Your dues by all means bent to get—
 You would not pay a single debt—
 One book you cast aside—the Bible—
 That would not suit—it was a libel,
 Which says, to others, justly do
 What you'd have others do to you.
 Well, with these debts, or less or more,
 You open'd for yourself a store,
 And, then enlarging still your stock,
 All thought you stable as a rock—
 No doubt you gain'd, for, you grew big,
 And drove about with horse and gig—
 There's one thing for you I must say,
 (I wish to give you all fair play)
 You kept your credit with your banker;
 And, that's a merchant's main-sheet anchor—
 I mean you did, some time ago,
 But now I find it is not so;
 And, that might be a crafty feint—
 (As satan sometimes apes the saint)
 A bait, to catch a larger loan—
 But, that's your business not my own—
 And, then you squander'd much away—
 You liv'd too high, you dress'd too gay—
 The wines with which your bins were stor'd,
 Your servant's hire, their waste and board,
 Your costly, splendid furniture,
 Was prodigal expenditure.
 This total turn of fortune's wheel,
 Has not been caus'd by Robert Peel—
 Nor stagnant trade, nor conflagration;
 But, waste and pride and speculation.
 I own you've shown a deal of spirit,
 And, give your Merchants all due merit—
 Yet what a sad, a melancholy
 Memento of your city's folly,
 Are those brick stores, on ev'ry side—
 Some empty—others ill-supplied—
 Were these all built on paper credit?
 If you say yes, then you have said it—
 I guess 'twould puzzle all your scholars,

To tell how many thousand dollars
Have flown down west, on eagle's wings.
For brick and stone, and other things ;
And paid to builders, for their labours ;
At best, but selfish, hostile neighbours—
Who'd build your house, or blow your brains out,
Merely to make their private gains out.
You've all gone mad—you might as soon
Send off your money to the moon ;
Or mars, or any other planet,
As purchase Boston brick and granite—
I speak in reason—not in anger—
For Boston is as good as Bangor.
No wonder there's a want of money—
Thank Heaven, we country bees have honey,
You dare not touch, nor burn our hives ;
Whilst wholesome laws protect our lives.
Had you but come with modest face,
In artless guise, explain'd your case,
And, told me plainly you were poor,
Had neither meat, nor cash, nor stove,
I've no such heart of stone or steel,
Within my breast, as not to feel—
I might have let you had some meat,
On tick, or freely as a treat—
But, when you talk of cash and barter,
When you have none, in any quarter ;
As you're so sharp, it just *takes me to*
Put on your bold commands a veto.
Yet, after all, you crafty thief,
Take home a quarter of this beef ;
And, *that are* turkey for your wife,
But, dont you touch it for your life.
And, learn henceforth, "that honesty
Is still the best of policy"—
That far beyond all contradiction,
Plain truth excels the finest fiction—
Better to wear a threadbare coat,
Than owe your *snip* a five-pound note—
To walk on foot, than ride a steed,
And owe the farmer for his feed—
To scan your ledger ev'ry day,
Than trust to those who write for pay—
And, slowly creep with your own cash,
Than with a Banker's run to smash !!!

AN ADDRESS
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OF THE
PROVINCE OF NEW-BRUNSWICK.

New Brunswick Legislators all,
Both rich and poor, both great and small,
Or sharp or dull, to you we call,
That you remember
The pledge and promise you let fall,
In last December.

As you are now about to meet,
And occupy an honour'd seat,
Fit only for the most *discreet*,
Of men among us ;
Mind that you use no trick or cheat,
To blind or wrong us.

We'll watch you well—and, if you do,
As we are many, you *but* few,
We'll give you all your proper due—
At next Election,
You'll be expos'd in public view—
For keen dissection !!

We don't expect stentorian lungs—
Demosthenes', or Cicero's tongues—
The legal knowledge that belongs
To Brougham's name—
No, if you only right our wrongs,
'Tis all we claim.

Mind one thing with the utmost care,
(In which we've all an equal share)
How you expend a thing so rare,
As public treasure—
If you should find some any where,
'Twill give us pleasure.

For reason's sake, (as well as rhyme,)
Don't waste that greater treasure, time—
We deem it not a common crime
To lose a day,
In those two speeches most sublime,
Of *Yea* and *Nay*.

Retrench—retrench we say again—
Waste neither paper, ink, nor pen,
Nor wax, nor light—but act like men,
 And men of sense—
Who will not waste such items, when
 They cause expence.

Turn not the House into a school,
Where stiff debaters learn by rule
Of wrong—the reason of a fool ;
 Where glib-tongu'd clamour
Is worse than that of joiner's tool—
 Or tinker's hammer.

Don't be like Janus, with two faces,
Bent upon adverse points and places—
Nor look behind, on those whose race is
 Already ended—
Look straight before, and see what cases
 May yet be mended.

Don't stand upon your feet three hours,
To shew your speechifying powers,
And scatter round the gaudy flowers
 Of rhetoric—
This, time and money both, devours—
 Be quick, be quick.

To those untravell'd in the way
Of legislation, we would say,
Let honour be your staff and stay—
 With head erect,
March boldly on without dismay,
 Your course direct.

First, see your views be just and right—
This ascertain'd, then firmly fight—
Should older members all unite,
 In coalition,
Let not their numbers, or their might,
 Turn your position.

Ne'er mind about your rank or youth—
Or if well-polish'd or uncouth—
And, if the Speaker (wanting ruth)
 Should cry out, order—
Tell him that common sense and truth
 Are nigh the border.

Speak never out of time or place—
Speak to the point in every case—
Don't stand with an unmeaning face,
 And silly tongue,
To advocate your own disgrace,
 Or public wrong.

Meet not too frequently to dine—
Waste not your leisure hours in wine—
Be at your boarding-house by nine,
 And trim your light—
If you would wish next day to shine,
 Read—think, and write.

Lest Morpheus steal your brains away,
Each morning rise with light's first ray—
The business of the coming day,
 Scan o'er and o'er—
And ere the Chaplain moves to pray,
 Be at the door.

Look to your country and your God,
If you would have their smile and nod—
Or else it will be very odd
 If you meet quarter—
You'd better taken up the hod,
 And carried mortar.

The debt demands some further tax—
Yet spare the lower classes' backs—
Those harass'd, hard-work'd, half-fed hacks—
 The Public weal
Points plainly to the recent acts,
 Of Premier Peel.

Then lay a tax on British goods,
To match his meddling with our woods—
A tax on rich, old maidens' hoods;
 And bach'lors' hats
If that wont do, then tax the *studs*
 Or mice and rats.

'Tis very plain, a pamper'd steed
That eats the sheep and cattle's feed,
Robs us of mutton, beef and seed—
 Then rat and mouse,
Are arrant thieves, in time of need,
 About a house.

But this we leave to your discretion—
 And, leave it with the full impression
 'That you will at th' approaching session,
 Find some means yet,
 To raise a fund, without oppression,
 To clear the debt.

Tax property a mod'rate sum—
 All incomes too, with wines and rum—
 Such taxes would bring half a plum,
 Throughout the year—
 Yet here most members will be dumb,
 We greatly fear.

We'll then don't fail to get a Loan,
 At three per cent—the best means known
 To cure the ills which make us groan—
 'Twill be no bubble—
 Yet make it not a stumbling stone,
 I'or further trouble.

The Money Grants' Initiation,
 We've not the slightest hesitation,
 In leaving to your legislation—
 Let all unite—
 And if it be a reformation,
 Resign *your right*.

Sir William is no despot here—
 There's nothing from his power to fear—
 Then pull away, and let him steer,
 In concert sweet—
 Keep all clean, tight and trim, this year,
 Both tack and sheet.

You can't do much when cash is scant—
 Yet if you've any thing to *grant*,
 Don't leave the schools and roads in want—
 Mind, roads and soil,
 You should improve, and sow and plant,
 With ceaseless toil.

Hear one and all, you are not sent
 To change the form of Government—
 And, if content, or malecontent,
 Let this content you,
 You must account for ev'ry cent,
 To them who sent you.

You are our servants—mind your work—
 Let none from public business shirk,
 Or in some hole, or corner lurk,
 But speak and do,
 As if each master were a Turk—
 Or you may rue.

May peace, truth, justice, still attend
 On all your councils to the end—
 Whate'er is wrong, may you amend—
 Long live Macbean ;
 To rule New Brunswick's faithful friend—
 God save the Queen.

THE ANCHOR,

NECESSARY FOR SAFETY.

WHEN seas are tranquil and serene,
 And summer skies are clear and bright;
 When all around is one vast scene,
 Of peace, of grandeur and delight:
 The sailor walks his deck with ease,
 Indulging all his little pride ;
 As on before a gentle breeze,
 He sees his noble vessel glide.

Elated with his present joy,
 Her various trappings he surveys—
 Her carvings now arrest his eye :
 And now her costly gildings blaze—
 He views aloft in tow'ring height,
 Her swelling canvas rise and spread ;
 And contemplates with fond delight,
 The splendid figure of her head.

But when deep gloom o'erspreads the sky,
 When winds and waves discordant jar ;
 When thunders roar and lightnings fly,
 And all is "elemental war ;"
 His dream expires—his fear awakes—
 His pleasing contemplations die—
 Straight to his anchor he betakes—
 On that his hopes of life rely.

Thus man while passing o'er life's sea,
 When all things round assume a smile :
 Indulges thoughtless mirth and glee—
 Each trifle can his heart beguile—

When fortune swells his crowded sail,
 And wealth flows in with ev'ry wind;
 Well-pleas'd he courts the prosp'rous gale—
 As all the bliss for man design'd.

He lifts ambition's shining vane—
 Displays the gaudy flag of pride—
 And glides along the placid main,
 Without a compass for his guide:
 But when stern fate awakes a storm,
 And wraps his prospects up in gloom,
 When dire disease, that gnawing worm,
 Proclaims his certain, speedy doom—

When conscience, flashing, ushers in
 The thunders of God's broken laws;
 Pourtrays the heinousness of sin,
 And points to ruin's gaping jaws;
 Only the grace of Christ can save—
 That anchor is his only care;
 To stay his soul upon the wave,
 Above the gulf of deep despair.

EPITAPH ON A GRASPING LAWYER.

Let no man dare, however brave,
 To trench upon Old Parchment's grave—
 He holds this lot, by full possession,
 Until the Court Supreme holds session—
 And, when the Judge's trump shall sound,
 He'll struggle hard to keep his ground! !

